



Research Paper

International Non-Governmental Organizations and Tehran's Path to Becoming a Global City

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Abstract

Expanding the external relations of a capital city will create opportunities for a country to internationalize and take advantage of the interactions with the state and non-state actors in the international system. Global cities today are the centers for the spread of different cultural and economic ideas; and they can promote specific brands and positive images of the countries to which they belong. The presence of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the big cities would help the international diffusion of the unique brand of that city. A non-governmental organization, which has no definite history of origin, is a concept that cannot be defined precisely, accurately, and comprehensively. Nevertheless, the undeniable fact is that the growth of these organizations and the gradual expansion of their role have been indicators of globalization. NGOs are increasingly becoming involved in providing assistance to governments to find solutions to many problems ranging from economic decline to the rising threats to public health and other issues regarding socio-economic development at all levels. It is assumed that the presence of international organizations in major cities can help countries to become more international. Today, a metropolis must have its own strategic document for internationalization aimed at encouraging transnational communication with different organizations. Tehran, as the capital of Iran and one of the largest and most modern cities in the Middle East, can be the center of international interactions between Iran and other countries; and considering its geostrategic location, it could eventually be the hub of the Middle East.

The main purpose of this study is to analyze the consequences of the expansion of the activities of international non-governmental organizations in Tehran for the transformation of this metropolis into a regional and international center. The key research questions are as follows: 1. What are

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the main advantages and disadvantages of encouraging more activities of international non-governmental organizations in the metropolis of Tehran? 2. How will the increase in these activities affect urban development in Tehran? To answer these questions, the method of qualitative content analysis is used to examine and explain the official documents related to Tehran's international relations, the effects of interactions of international non-governmental organizations in the internationalization of the city of Tehran. The research hypothesis illustrates the authors' assertion that the activities of the international NGOs will increase Iran's influence in the international system by facilitating international relations of Tehran at regional and global levels, and even the country's bilateral and multilateral relations with other actors.

There were attempts to formulate and adopt a flexible and forward-looking strategy for the urban development of Tehran based on dynamic documents, which would take into account changing environmental and social conditions of the city, particularly the rapid growth rate of the population. Urban development documents in Iran before and after the 1979 Islamic Revolution have repeatedly emphasized the internationalization of Tehran through the presence and activities of international organizations. Farmanfarmaian Urban Development Plan (FUDP) was one of the first urban plans in Tehran, which was approved in 1966. For the most part, FUDP recommended policies to regulate land-use in Tehran, elucidated some aspects of the internationalization of Abbasabad hills, and also determined the appropriate location of the international airport in Tehran. Pahlavi's Shahestan plan was another pre-revolution attempt at city development in Iran and was meant to provide the groundwork for the globalization plan of Tehran which was the first such plan in the entire Middle East region. The first post-revolution urban development plan in Iran was approved in 2007. The long-term vision plan of Tehran municipality was designed in line with the country's 20-year Vision 2025 document, and aimed at turning Tehran into a global city by promoting activities of regional and international scope. The most important aspects of internationalization of this urban development plan of Tehran include: 1. Transforming Tehran into an information city (Iran's gateway to the information age); 2. Turning Tehran into a smart and global city with increasing share of modern economy; 3. Providing space, infrastructure and necessary communications in Tehran to promote the viability and activity of the city globally and regionally.

The city planners are aware that they must act swiftly to provide the basic services for the residents, and thus they are advised to rely on collaborations with the influential NGOs to confront the common health, environmental and socio-economic crises, and more urgently deal with the adverse impacts of climate change through formal and informal interactions. According to the vision document, by 2025 Tehran will be in a situation where 50% of its GDP will be allocated to knowledge-based economic activities. Tehran's advantages for internationalization include: 1. It has good infrastructure; 2. The city enjoys a valuable geostrategic location because Iran can be the center of regional activities for international organizations in the Middle East

and the Persian Gulf; 3. Tehran can also act as a gateway for such activities in Southwest Asia and Central Asia; 4. Tehran is located in a country with relative stable and secure environment for the activities of these organizations in a region where many countries are subjected to internal security threats, wars and terrorism. In contrast, the disadvantages of internationalization of Tehran by relying on the NGOs activities are as follows: 1. The poor communication between Tehran and specialized UN agencies and other international organizations; 2. Lack of sufficient attention to scientific research in the field of international NGOs; 3. Weakness of local governments' specific laws and regulations for urban diplomacy and international relations of Tehran; 4. Lack of national understanding and consensus about Tehran's collaboration with international NGOs; 5. the clash between ideological orientation of the Islamic Republic and the capitalist value system; 6. Anti-Iran sanctions aimed at its economic-political isolation. In their research findings, the authors explain the relationship between the activities of international non-governmental organizations in Tehran by helping to improve the level of Tehran's international relations at the regional and global levels, and expanding the Islamic Republic's foreign influence.

Keywords: Tehran, NGOs, Non-Governmental, Internationalization, Mega City

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Research Paper

Economic Sanctions and War in US Foreign Policy in the Post-Cold War Era

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Abstract

The adoption of coercive instruments by governments has a longer history than foreign policy itself. In the absence of diplomacy, armed conflicts were the primary means of communication among countries. Over time and with the growing interdependence of countries, military means (i.e., armed conflicts) as the sole conduit of coercion in foreign policy were supplanted by a wide range of coercive means available for governments to use. However, war as the ultimate inevitable option or the last resort has remained relevant. Economic sanction has been one of the most important non-military coercive instruments of foreign policy that has increasingly been used by the United States in recent years.

Many questions have been raised regarding the relationship between this coercive economic tool of foreign policy and the traditional tool of coercion (i.e., war). These questions seek to examine the role of sanctions as an independent or complementary tool of foreign policy, and to explain how sanctions play a role in substituting or preparing the grounds for war. In this paper, the authors attempt to find an answer for the following questions: What role do economic sanctions play in U.S. foreign policy? How is sanction used as the forerunner of war or its alternative? In the research hypothesis, it is asserted that understanding economic sanction as an alternative to war leads to decreasing the pressure of sanctions in response to targeted government's cooperation, while perceiving economic sanction as a complement (and precursor) to war leads to maintaining (or increasing) the pressure of sanctions, despite the targeted state's relative acceptance of the demands of the coercive state.

To answer these questions, the authors first explain the importance of coercive tools in US foreign and security policy based on the differences between military-civilian coercive tools, and the distinction between soft

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power, hard power and “power to coerce” (P2C). Accordingly, we distinguish between the forced “use of force” to defend and the “use of force” to initiate wars. Also, the boundaries between implicit coercion and absolute coercion are drawn. In the next step, we identify the relative position of economic sanction (and war) as the coercive tools of US foreign policy; and the relationship between coercive diplomacy and economic sanction is also explained. Then, the typology of sanctions and specifically the distinction between bargaining and punitive sanctions are explored. Sanctions are not used in a vacuum, and are primarily imposed against adversaries, the next section provides a chronology of events showing the nature of US relations with two of its nemeses, namely North Korea and Iraq in order to collect data required to test the research hypothesis, using event data analysis.

The findings show that economic sanction can play a role as either the precursor or an alternative to war. Given the US government's ultimate strategy toward the targeted state and the latter's potential to create significant costs for the US, this role is defined at three levels: regional, international and US domestic arena. The event data analysis of US-North Korean relations shows that the high destructive power of the North Korean government (given its possession of nuclear weapons) led to the role of economic sanction as an alternative to war against that country. In contrast, the case of Iraq reflects the strategy of regime change towards that country, a strategy that was facilitated by the use of economic sanction as an instrument of weakening an adversary before waging a full-scale war to accomplish foreign policy objectives.

Key Words: Coercive Instruments, Economic Sanctions, Punitive Sanctions, Bargaining Sanctions, US Foreign Policy

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Research Paper

An Analysis of “Resistance Political Economy” within the Framework of Friedrich List’s Theory

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Abstract

“Resistance Political Economy” (RPE) which is rooted in economic thoughts of the Islamic Revolution leaders as well as the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran has attracted the attention of political economy analysts as an approach officially announced to be the national economic strategy of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Taking a different look at this issue, the present study intends to explore the features and components of RPE within the framework of Friedrich List’s theory. Based on the theory of national economy, a host of factors such as social customs, specific historical conditions as well as the functions and evolution of its economic, political and social institutions of a country or a nation influence its economic policymaking. Thus, the political and socio-economic characteristics as well as the religious tendency and historical experiences of Iran, have directed its economic system toward a particular justice-centered national economy known as RPE. It is argued that an emphasis on RPE using Iran’s national production capacities leads to the strengthening of national power and improvement of welfare. For the theoretical framework to explain the arguments set forth by the advocates of RPE, the authors use Frederick List’s theory of national economics which is based on national production and has an indigenous dimension. The domestic economy is viewed as an instrument of national empowerment and independence. List’s conceptual analysis can be very useful in explaining and analyzing the concept of RPE. This is a broad concept concerned with development at all levels, and focuses on increasing economic resilience, robustness and sustainability, while reducing economic vulnerability, dependence and fragility. The research questions include: 1. How can Iranian policymakers build resilience as Iran confronts the internal and domestic pressures for change? 2. What

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is the most important component and characteristics of resistance political economy (RPE) within the framework of List's theory of national economy?

3. How will development based on RPE affect Iran's national power and public welfare?

First, the characteristics of the national economy from Frederick List's point of view are discussed, and then the principles and pillars of RPE as understood by Iranian top decision-makers and contained in national legal documents such the constitution are examined. Finally, the policy proposals that can help the achievement of the objectives of RPE within the country's economic structure are presented. The authors suggest the following policies for economic stability and resilience in the period before and after the occurrence of economic shocks. The policies recommended for the pre-economic shocks period include: 1. Pursuing the strategy of comparative advantage by increasing investment in industries in which Iran has superior capacities and the required resources to strive for access to regional and international markets and prevail over its competitors. 2. Diversifying export commodities and reduce its dependency on the export of raw material and natural resources such as oil and gas by investing in the development of refineries, petrochemical industries, and lucrative extractive industries. 3. Supporting knowledge-based and innovative enterprises, and investing more in new R&D projects in order to strengthen production capacity based on local knowledge. 4. Investing in education in order to improve human capital for sustainable economic growth. 5. Strengthening infrastructures against natural disasters, and addressing the issue of overpopulation of large cities as a result of internal migration through investment in projects in towns and rural areas for more balanced economic development. 6. Diversification of economic activities in all sectors particularly in agriculture in different parts of the country. Measures recommended for post-economic shocks period include: 1. Designing policies that lead to more resilience, e.g., encouraging people to participate more in the community and support measures to reduce poverty, improve the distribution of income and wealth, fight corruption, encourage privatization by increasing the share of the private sector in economic activities. 5. Planning for economic recovery projects in advance to be implemented immediately after the crisis. The findings indicate that the institutionalization of RPE with its emphasis on maximizing the use of indigenous and national capacities to strive for sustainable economic development will lead to the strengthening of national power and improvement of welfare.

Key Words: "Resistance Political Economy", Iran, Economic Resilience, Sustainable Development, Islamic Revolution

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Research Paper

The Impact of Cleavages on the Consensus Crisis and the Issue of Development in Iran

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Abstract

For effective policy-making over long-term development planning horizons in Iran, there is a need for the redefinition of the goals and approaches which are constructively unified and collaborative at the micro and macro levels. In the contemporary Iranian society, one can observe numerous divisions which are rooted in the threefold identity of Iranians based on Islamic, western, and national parts. The discord and lack of consensus caused by a multitude of intellectual, ideational, social, political, attitudinal differences and conflicts have acted as barriers to development of Iran. In the first section, the authors briefly discuss significant events in the contemporary history of Iran such as the Constitutional Revolution, the coup d'état which pave the way for the authoritarian rule of Mohammad Reza Shah, the top-down government efforts to modernize and industrialize which led to injustice and deprivation in a fast-growing economy, as well as the widespread social mobilization which culminated in the 1979 Islamic Revolution. They then address the contradictory worldviews of those who oppose the Western liberal model of economic development. Therefore, they in its place have been searching for a new model of development which is appropriate for Iran's socio-economic environment. In the Islamic Republic of Iran, some decision-makers in the government and influential stakeholders have advocated the traditional model of development as used in the world, but some other groups have been calling for choosing other patterns of progress which are more adaptable to Iranian-Islamic characteristics of the country. They have been critical of the traditional model of development which they believe is not appropriate for Iran. The disagreements on the meaning of the concept of development, and the most suitable and effective instruments of achieving the goals of national development have transformed Iranian policymaking into a complicated issue.

The authors attempt to find answers to the following research questions: 1. What are the most important factors which have contributed to the failure of Iran's development plans? 2. How can the model of good governance solve the problems of successful formulation and implementation of the national development plans in the Islamic Republic of Iran? In the substantive hypothesis, it is asserted that the deep divisions, which have been manifested in myriad ways in Iranian society

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and the ensuing crisis of lack of consensus are the most important factors contributing to the failures of development plans; and if the disunity is continued, it can cause instability. It seems that the focus on “good governance” could be the key to solving the problem of consensus-building and also help the policymakers to confront the challenges of development with the help of the civil society and the private sector. Good governance depends on a set of issues such as transparency, the fight against corruption, accountability and the rule of law. Consensus building requires the full participation of all stakeholders including the minorities, and marginalized groups in the society. In the last section, a list of practical recommendations on socio-economic and political development are provided. They include: 1- Reducing the number of decision-making bodies and eliminating their parallel operation; 2- Defining rights and duties more clearly in order to reduce the likelihood of misinterpretation aimed at strengthening the status of the powerful decisionmakers and those who are tasked with policy implementation in the public institutions; 3- Providing greater opportunities for minorities including ethnic groups and women for the purpose of accelerating the process of nation-building and sustainable development; 4- Reviewing foreign policy objectives and the instruments used to achieve the goals of securing and guaranteeing national interests; 5- Increasing political capacity for broad participation and support for fundamental freedoms aimed at closing the gaps between the ruling elites and the citizens. Development in Iran requires an approach based on the principles of Islamic, indigenous and modern identities. Political divide is deep and wide but it is imperative to find common ground to reach the consensus needed for development. It seems that a change in governance practices is inevitable for economic development, political stability and national security.

Keywords: Islamic Republic of Iran, Crisis of Consensus, Development, Cleavage, Good Governance

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Research Paper

Rethinking Trump's Foreign Policy in the Context of Economic Nationalism

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Abstract

The main objectives of economic nationalism as one of the Trump administration's top priorities were to increase the power of government and control the market by means of state interventionism. To achieve this goal, its proponents emphasized policies, which led to a tightening of trade policy, opposition to economic multilateralism, and a return to ideas of the Monroe Doctrine and the tradition of isolationism. The views of the former president Obama and those with different perspectives on how foreign economic policies should be conducted were ignored. During the Trump era, the ideas and policies related to economic nationalism spread around the world, especially among the right-wing politicians and theorists. Although this type of nationalism has a long history, but its revival in the U.S. neoconservative political circle drew the attention of a large number of politicians, parties and political groups in other countries to the prospect and value of implementing the principles of economic nationalism in their own foreign policymaking. As expected, the advocates of globalization criticized Trump's decision to adopt policies in favor of economic nationalism against liberal and free-trade ideas. They held the belief that the resurgence of nationalism constitutes a threat to liberalism and globalization. Moreover, they issued a warning about its effects on foreign investments and the likelihood of negative reactions of governments who were to lose from US shift to trade protectionism.

The research questions raised here are: 1. What are the theoretical dimensions of economic nationalism? 2. What factors have led to the rise of economic nationalist ideas and practices in the United States? 3. To what extent had economic nationalism influenced the Trump administration's foreign policy? 4. What are lessons learned from the economic and political consequences of Trump's economic nationalism for the political leaders who are interested in pursuing Trump's mercantilist approach? The research hypothesis asserts that economic nationalism with its emphasis on trade protectionism, national power, unilateralism, accumulation of national wealth, of national economy from the world economy, prioritization of

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national identity and nationalization had an undeniable impact on Trump's foreign policy. To test the hypothesis, Trump's foreign policies will be evaluated in the context of his economic nationalist way of thinking using Robert Gilpin's theoretical framework. Qualitative and secondary data will be collected and analyzed using a qualitative case study method for the careful assessments of public statements made by US politicians and the policy outcomes. The findings show that neo-mercantilist economic nationalism had greatly influenced the Trump administration's foreign policymaking, and had led to the use of trade protectionism as an instrument for national wealth accumulation in the expectation of increasing US national power. Finally, policy recommendations are offered as a guide to the foreign policymakers of any country who intend to adopt economic nationalism and mercantilist principles, based on lessons drawn from the US experience of formulating and implementing foreign policy based on economic nationalist ideas. These eight interlocking points are as follows: 1. Pursue national wealth and income accumulation; 2. Consider a balance of trade surplus in economic transactions with other countries to bolster national economy; 3. Pay attention to ensuring the goal of economic self-sufficiency; 4. Choose the time-saving and low-cost approach of unilateralism to secure national interests and to protect domestic industries from foreign competition to a feasible extend; 5. Place the rise of national power among the primary foreign policy objectives; 6. Be aware of the impossibility of creating a powerful state without a cohesive national identity; 7. Prioritize the expectations and demands of the citizens over business consideration in policy intervention; 8. Finally, if there is any doubt between prioritizing the acquisition of wealth for a particular social class or national power, one should undoubtedly consider increasing national power in the formulation and implementation of foreign policy.

Keywords: Economic Nationalism, Trade Protectionism, Trump, Foreign Policy, US

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Research Paper

Globalization, Intensification of Urbanization and Decline of Linguistic Diversity

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Abstract

The phenomenon of globalization in the present age has caused profound and far-reaching changes in human life. Due to the globalization and expansion of information technology, people are becoming aware of the existence of job opportunities in different parts of a country and the world in a more effective and faster manner. In addition to the spread of more advanced communication technologies, the improvement of transportation systems have made it easy for people to move around. Likewise, the economic dimension of globalization has facilitated the movement of capital and technology across borders, intensified the industrialization of cities, created job opportunities in the industrial and service sectors of cities, and has increased the migration of rural labor to urban areas. All these developments have intensified urbanization, which is not only an increase in the size of population in urban areas, but also a dynamic process that brings with it two types of movement and change: First, the movement and transfer of population from rural to urban areas with changes in functions, especially in economic sphere: Second, Urbanization is accompanied by changes in demographic composition of urban population, lifestyle, value system of individuals, and generally speaking by cultural changes. In multicultural societies, language as the most important element of cultural identity and the factor of differentiation of groups and individuals is the first element that is endangered in migration to cities. Language as a means of communication is the most important need of people for interaction, so it is also the first cultural element that is affected by migration to cities. Cities usually have a culture of consumption and assimilation; and learning a dominant language facilitates the assimilation process. One of the most important cultural attributes which is lost due to urbanization in multicultural societies is language. A key objective of this article is to answer the question of how urbanization affects language diversity in cities. In the hypothesis, it is

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declared that globalization with the accompanied intensification of urbanization cause a linguistic decline by the assimilation and integration of immigrants in the new urban society as well as the drowning of the immigrant population in the host population. The ways by which urbanization affect language occur in the context of changing the "linguistic attitudes" of the speakers. This study is conducted by analyzing the data collected in research projects and official reports of UNESCO and DESA concerning the implications of globalization on language developments, as well as the global consequences of urban growth for linguistic diversity.

The case studies show that although people seem to give up their local language for social, cultural, political and especially economic reasons and use the dominant or more authoritative language that is common in cities, this change is rooted in the change of their "linguistic attitude" which can be considered as one of the important cultural consequences of urbanization by creating positive attitudes towards the dominant and valid language and negative attitudes towards their local indigenous languages. This is done by facilitating acculturation and assimilation with the majority, as well as reducing the use of minority languages, language resistance of future generations and generally the absence of intergenerational transmission of language which consequently lead to the elimination or death of a language. What is important here is the linguistic attitude of the speakers towards their language, which affects the preservation or elimination of the language. Of course, it does not matter whether the immigrant community or the host society lose its language. Although demographic and cultural heterogeneity in cities seems to have become a fundamental reality in the age of globalization, and cities have become places of cultural diversity today, this is not the case with language because the communicative nature of language is such that we see linguistic homogeneity in cities rather than linguistic diversity.

It is believed that urban migration has the same linguistic effects as migrating to a country, but urbanization together with rural-to-urban migration within countries, given their prevalence, seem to have more negative consequences on international language diversity than international migration for three reasons: 1. population mobility within countries is usually not subject to any laws or regulations; 2. it is difficult to migrate to other countries, so migration to cities is more widespread and easier, and 3. A village is usually a source of linguistic diversity, and the withdrawal of the younger generation, which transmits the language and culture of the village to the next generation, leads to the decline of rural languages. It is important to note that according to UN estimates, the world's urban population will increase from 49% to 70% by 2050, and the urban population of the Third World will be 64%. The data indicate the evacuation of the world's villages, especially the rural areas of the developing world with its rich source of world linguistic diversity. On a large scale, the growing trend of urbanization will have a negative effect on linguistic diversity in the world; and it will shape a bleak future for the world's linguistic diversity. The analysis of the

impact of urbanization on languages shows how it can destroy language diversity and increase language homogeneity in the world.

Keywords: Globalization, Urbanization, Migration, Linguistic Diversity, Linguistic Attitude

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Research Paper

The Trilateral Cooperation of Iran-Azerbaijan-Russia in the North-South Corridor and Iran's National Security

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Abstract

The major economic plans in the Eurasia are deeply rooted in the great games played by the regional states for the purpose of constantly gaining more power and ever-expanding influence in order to acquire and maintain an advantageous position in the international system. The main function of the North-South Corridor as an economic project is to facilitate transportation and trade at the regional and global levels. In this paper, the authors attempt to find answers to the following research question: How will the trilateral cooperation of Iran-Azerbaijan-Russia in the North-South Corridor affect Iran's national security? Within the framework of Gilpin's theory of the global economy and the challenges and opportunities in intensifying economic integration by trade and investment, they examine the consequences of economic cooperation between Iran and the two Eurasian states of Russia and Azerbaijan. In the substantive hypothesis, it is asserted that these three countries' cooperation in the North-South international corridor facilitates transportation and trade of commodities, and improves Iran's political relations with regional countries by reducing threats and providing Iran with opportunities for mutually beneficial economic interactions in Eurasia. One of the purposes of the paper is to understand the nature of relations between Iran, Russia and Azerbaijan. In the past, political and military considerations had a greater impact on the relations between Iran and Russia, as compared to economic ones.

During the Cold War, Iran was an arena for confrontation where conflict between the great powers played out, because the rival states sought to gain more influence in Iran as one of the most strategically located states in the region. After the fall of the Soviet Union, Moscow continued to pursue

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the goal of maintaining cordial relations with Tehran in the hope of preventing the rival powers from driving a wedge between the two states. Russia keeps a watchful eye on Iran's foreign policy and its impact on the Caspian Sea, Central Asia, the Caucasus and the Middle East. The North-South corridor came at a time when Putin was proposing the idea of Russia acting as a modern law-abiding great power. In line with this policy, Moscow decided to increase its bilateral cooperation with Iran and simultaneously interact constructively with the West. The inauguration of Donald Trump as the new U.S. president, followed by the withdrawal of Washington from the JCPOA, as well as the reimposition of additional economic sanctions against Iran, weakened the P5-Iran nuclear deal, and were among the factors which influenced the nature of Iran-Russia relations during Putin's fourth term. After the outbreak of war in Syria, and the advent of different approaches adopted by the leaders in the two countries to support the Bashar Assad regime demonstrated the limits of Moscow-Tehran cooperation in the region. However, Russia under Putin has often sought to treat Iran as a regional power in contrast to the U.S. regional policies. Despite their different foreign policy objectives as related to certain policy issues such as Syria and Israel, Iran and Russia still have the intention and capability to cooperate in Eurasia and elsewhere in the international system. Western sanctions against Iran and Russia have created another reason for the two countries' interest in expanding bilateral trade ties.

Iran with its large population provides a large market for Russian goods and services, and thus Russia has tried to encourage closer cooperation between Iran and the member states of Eurasian Economic Union (EEU). For its part, Iran also looks at the EEU with its significant market as a good opportunity to become one of the most important routes for the transfer of goods and services between the countries in this union and South Asia, particularly India. Iranian policymakers have planned to improve economic and trade relations between Iran and South Caucasian countries. The North-South corridor has also created a good opportunity for Iran and the Republic of Azerbaijan to work toward more cooperation based on mutual interest. The government in Baku joined the process in 2005 with the aim of increasing its strategic importance and power in the South Caucasus.

In order to analyze the relationship between the volume of trade facilitated by the North-South Corridor and Iran's political and economic security in the Caucasus, the authors rely on the available secondary data sources as well as data collected by the use of the method of survey research in which a group of experts were asked to complete a questionnaire. The result showed that most respondents considered the impact of economic factors (e.g., free trade, customs status and security of basic goods) to be more important than the political-security factors (e.g., terrorism, extremism and the rivalry of major powers). The findings show that the North-South corridor will certainly have positive economic consequences by facilitating trade, but it could indirectly bring about non-economic benefits by encouraging closer political ties which will help these states to collectively combat terrorism and confront other common security threats. Iran's cooperation with Russia and Azerbaijan in completing the North-South

corridor will increase regional trade and economic mobility and will enhance Iran's national security due to the following reasons: 1. Encouraging free trade, 2. Modernizing trade infrastructure, 3. Increasing the investment by the private sector, 4. Facilitating economic diversification, 5. Decreasing the negative impact of U.S. sanctions against Iran and Russia, 6. Increasing Iran's economic relations with the Eurasian countries which might generate more export revenues, 7. Increasing Iran's bargaining power on various regional issues, 8. Iran's membership in regional organizations reduces its international isolation and helps it to be in a better position to interact with state and non-state extra-regional players such as the World Bank, and WTO, 9. Facilitating regional cooperation in confronting external security threats in the region. However, for the purpose of achieving maximum benefits from cooperation based on the North-South Corridor, strong political and economic incentives are required to motivate the Eurasian countries to work with Iran.

Keywords: Iran, Azerbaijan, Russia, National Security, North-South Corridor

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Research Paper

Great Power Rivalries and the Persistence of Iran-U.S. Adversarial Relations

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Abstract

A main objective of this paper is to advance debates over the adverse impact of intensified great power competition on Iran's relations with the United States in the security domain. A key international factor to explain the confrontational nature of Iran-US relations over the past four decades is the rivalries of the great powers over global domination and supremacy. As China (and possibly Russia) seek to alter their relatively inferior power position in the international system, they might eventually succeed in overtaking the U.S. as the global leader. The article then explains that the evidence provided by the Trump administration did not verify its claims that Iran has been the key threat to the security of the region. Despite the absence of a salient "Iran threat", the US has increased its military presence in the region. With the help of Iran's regional adversaries which have challenged the conflict resolution efforts aimed at ending the two states' persistent enmity, key American realist and neocon politicians have been persuaded that the U.S. have the most to gain from "*Irān'harāsi*" (illogical fear of Iran) than resolving the Iran-US dispute. There is also a group of Iranian hardline stakeholders who have sneered at the adverse outcome of the heightened tensions if the current climate of Iran-U.S. cold war would become a permanent feature of Iran's foreign relations. Among the questions addressed here are what systemic factors have influenced Iran's position in the U.S. national security strategy? Why and how do US hegemonic aspiration and the great power competitions affect Iran-U.S. relations? Four main conclusions are presented: First, the great power rivalries over the expansion of global supremacy will increase and will have an unfavorable impact on the security of the Persian Gulf. Second, the closer Iran gets to China and Russia to counterbalance the US enmity towards the Iranian regime, the more determined American politicians would become to reinforce U.S. ties with its regional allies and partners. Third, the change in

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Iran's foreign policy behaviors depends on the removal of US economic sanctions, but Iran is most likely to continue safeguarding its ties with the state- and non-state players within the “*mehvar-e moghāvemāt*” (Axis of Resistance) to gain a more advantageous regional status. Fourth, the deepening of cooperation between Israel and the Arab states will have very little impact on Iran-U.S. relations, but it will decrease the probability of Iranian leaders to abandon the country's ballistic missiles program in exchange for U.S. return to the JCPOA.

Keywords: Iran-U.S. Relations, Hegemony, Hostility, Great Power Rivalries, Balance of Threat

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Research Paper

Jacques Lacan and Political Fantasy

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Abstract

As a consequence of taking psychology out of the realm of the individual, the French philosopher and psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan has introduced concepts which have been highly regarded by philosophers and socio-political theorists. One of the most important concepts in Lacanian terminology is 'fantasy'. The authors' main objective is to carefully explain the concept of fantasy as used in Lacan's theoretical discussions, and then examine the socio-political function of fantasy as a concept that facilitates social reproduction of the ideology of force in totalitarian structures by creating an idealistic and mobilizing discourse. In search of a proper and convincing answer to the question of what is the significance of Lacan's fantasy, we use Fairclough's critical discourse analysis method to explore the relationship between this concept and power as one of its socio-political functions. It is important to look at how concepts are used in ideological discourses for the abuse of power which could in turn lead to inequality, and discrimination. A critical discourse analyst seeks to define the concepts which are used in hegemonic discourse to establish the power of a hegemon in society. In the theoretical section, an introduction to Lacanian psychology and its relation to socio-political analysis is presented, and then there is an attempt to describe how the subject is constructed from Lacan's point of view. As a starting point and background for understanding the core of Lacanian psychoanalysis, three concepts of mirror (the imaginary), the symbolic, and the real, and the stages of formation and construction of other concepts such as the O/other and jouissance are described. Lacan argues that the subject always seeks to reach wholeness in two imaginary and symbolic realms and in the process of his subjectivity, but this effort of the subject is only an unattainable fantasy because both of these realms have disjunctions and gaps, and the wholeness is in the real, where it is unattainable. Fantasy covers this failure with its elements and overcomes the loss in the Other, and it must also be considered to belong to the social sphere.

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According to Lacan's discourse, in all ideologies and political schools, from the utopianism of Plato and Farabi to the communist and fascist movements, wherever people are promised a united and homogeneous non-pluralistic society, those promises are only "fantasy" in order to hide the gaps and inherent shortcomings of the social arena and cover the natural pluralities and ignore the antagonism and inherent differences in society. The purpose is to promise an imaginary society full of goodness in which the sun of happiness never sets on the followers and the believers. This is a well-organized society that has become the place of retrieval and accumulation of all good virtues, free from all evils. This is a society where differences, violence and conflicts give way to unity, empathy and absolute prosperity. This is the utopian idea that human beings, in the absence of their lost paradise and lost jouissance, paint its image on their imaginary canvases which show this dream world in myths and stories. Of course, a thinker or a group of theorists within the framework of a philosophy or ideology from time to time have tried to seek the realization of this utopia which is sometimes based on the "fantasy" of racial or religious superiority and occasionally promise goodness, prosperity or absolute equality on the basis of certain political ideology. However, since almost all scholars who utopianize were already aware of their failure, they always wanted to justify their failure by introducing an external destructive element as a cause of turmoil and obstacle to happiness. They then make promises about eliminating the destructive and obstructive factor in order to keep alive the element of desire to strive in an attempt to achieve a unified and harmonious society which is free from any defects and shortcomings for the adherents of the endorsed ideology. According to some scholars, this desire for a single voice and absolute harmony leads to the desire of utopianists for totalitarianism and the suppression of the fundamental freedoms of society leading to the most severe and violent forms of confrontation with opposition groups. Accordingly, the commentators of Lacanian psychoanalytic discourse interpret the design of all ideologies and political schools advocating reforms in pursuit of a utopia based on unity and solidarity as mere "fantasies" which in fact are grounds for totalitarianism.

Keywords: Fantasy, Lacan, the O/other, Jouissance, Utopia

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Research Paper

The Image of Government in Iranian Fictions, 1921-1941

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Abstract

Between the coup in February 1921 and the occupation of Iran by the Allied Powers which ultimately put an end to Reza Shah Pahlavi's reign (1925-1941), a series of political and social events occurred that led to the rise of the absolutist state in the country. The emerging form of governance was based on an image of government that influenced the discourse among various political groups and movements, including nationalists, leftists, Islamists and monarchists, and also reflected the people's everyday life certainties. In this paper, the main research questions are as follows: 1. Was the specific image of government rooted in the worldview of the time and the everyday life certainties of the ordinary people? 2. What important factors in various fields had shaped the image of government? 3. To what extent was this image of government resonated in the fictional books in literature of this period?

In the hypothesis, it is asserted that Iran's modern government in the first Pahlavi period had been formed on the basis of an image which can be found in the most important Iranian novels of the period, and is rooted in the certainties of the daily lives of the Iranian people, and created dichotomies such as authoritarianism/ democracy in the various aspects of life. Using the method of explaining typical characters in György Lukács' sociology of novel as well as the theoretical framework of Mannheim's sociology of knowledge, the authors study and explain Iranian expectations and views of government during 1921-1941 period as indicated in the social novels and stories. As in other fields of art, fiction books reflect the socio-political ideals of the authors and inevitably manifest the existing realities, and circumstances of the society, including each country and region to which they belong. As a consequence, the outstanding works of a certain era reflect the authors' own ideas about the prevailing situation, criticism of the disorder and malfunctions, and suggestions for change and reforms

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Furthermore, the authors' description of imaginary events or re-narrating real events, characterization and typification, and even description of people's everyday lifestyles in a given time period, reveal their realistic views. According to György Lukács account of the decline of aristocracy in Balzac's, despite Balzac's personal attachment to this class, he accurately and possibly unintentionally revealed how the emerging bourgeoisie was gradually seizing socio-economic and political power and marginalizing the aristocrats. Similarly, borrowing from Mannheim in *Ideology and Utopia*, we see two different aspects, the ideological aspect and the utopian aspect, in the top fiction books written between 1921-1941 during the reign of Reza Shah. The former refers to the realistic nature of the stories and the latter to their critical-idealistic feature which reflects the author's specific thoughts and worldview. We hypothesized that the fiction books in literature of this period in both ideological and utopian aspects, have specific worldviews in relation to the image of government in various domains such as domestic, foreign, economic and cultural policies. This was in part proposed by Davood Feirahi.

Among the authors whose works have been examined are Morteza Mushfeq Kazemi, Mohammad Ali Jamalzadeh, Mohammad Massoud, Sadegh Hedayat, Mohammad Hejazi and Bozorg Alavi. They are among the influential thinkers of their time and remain familiar names for Iranian readers. In addition, we studied the available critiques which evaluate the key ideas and interpret the authors' intentions, and discuss the weaknesses of the works by providing supporting evidence. The interpretations of the authors' specific narratives, especially the works of Abdul Ali Dastghib was examined in order to better understand these written accounts of the past. The content analysis of these fictions helps to analyze and decipher some hidden aspects of factors in various areas such as domestic politics, foreign policy, economic policy, cultural policy (worldview) which affected the formation and reformation of government. This will in turn help us to understand the advent of dichotomies such as authoritarianism/ democracy, independence/ dependence, public interest/ private ownership, and finally value-normative duality and friction in government and politics of the time. Although these dichotomies initially appeared in this time period, they remained a permanent fixture in the debates in the currents of thought in Iranian political circles. Consequently, the analysis of their roots is very important in better understanding the clashes of ideas and worldviews in Iranian society today and even predicting the probable future developments.

Keywords: Iranian Fictions, Authoritarianism, Pre-revolution Image of Government, Sociology of Novels, Ideological and Utopic Aspects

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